Halifax Housing Authority Annual Report

1988

89-05797/

Enthusiastic Cooperation

The Management and Board of Directors undertook a lengthy management review to respond to today's requirements and those anticipated in the 1990's. The result is a new structure to better serve the City as well as existing and potential tenants.

Various levels of government have responded with funds necessary to regenerate Uniake Square. While we are very pleased with that program, that kind of work is far from complete with particular need in Mulgrave Park and the Greystone project.

Results to date would not have been accomplished without the enthusiastic cooperation of staff and the work of the voluntary Board. The community owes them a large "thank you".

J.D. MacIsaac
Chairman

A Renewed Commitment

This, our first annual report, focuses on the activities of the Halifax Housing Authority during the calendar year of 1988. The report looks to the future and addresses the activities and highlights of the past year. If any of our readers have any comments or suggestions about our report, I would be pleased to receive them.

A number of changes have taken place recently which demonstrate a renewed commitment to the people we serve. As a social housing agency, we have a greater responsibility to the people we serve than traditional landlords. The changes stress our commitment to providing affordable, secure accomodation for all our tenants.

While I look forward to our promising future I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the work of a very dedicated, committed staff and Board. With the continued unfailing assistance of our funding partners, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Nova Scotia Department of Housing and the City of Halifax, we will continue to strive to ensure that the highest quality of service is provided to all our tenants.

Michael H. Spencer
General Manager

Board of Directors

*Mr. Jack MacIsaac Q.C.	Chairman - Lawyer, Patterson Kitz
Mr. John Yauss	Vice-Chairman - Executive Director, Recreation Council on Disability
Dr. Margaret Ellison	Professor, Mount St. Vincent University
Ms. Sharon Fogo	Architect, Anwyll Fogo
Mr. James Power	Teacher, Cornwallis Jr. High School
*Mr.Richard Carrier	R.J.C. Real Estate Management Ltd.
*Mrs. Sandra Clarke	Homemaker/Teacher
Mr.Alan Fitz-Gerald	Real Estate Agent, Montreal Trust
Ms. Maude Lorde	Camp Hill Hospital

* Retired December 31, 1988

Response to Need: The Evolution of Resource Management

During, and immediately following, the Second World War, the population of Halifax swelled with service personnel and wartime workers who could afford to purchase the small houses and flats in which they lived. In a short time, this removed over 2000 rental units from the market, and with a simultaneous crackdown by government on the operation of dangerous and decrepit tenements, little affordable housing was left for those with low incomes.

The Halifax Housing Authority was commissioned on April 24, 1948 to remove sub-standard housing in Halifax. This role later evolved into helping to provide affordable and safe rental accommodation for families, seniors and the disabled. Although it was the unusual housing trend of the 1940's which led to the creation of this body, the Housing Authority continues to fill the housing requirements of people, who for many reasons, cannot afford the high cost of renting from private landlords.

The first public housing units were in place by April of 1953, and, when completed, consisted of 161 family units known as the Bayers Road Project. Five-hundred and eighty-seven families applied for these units, emphasizing the severe shortage of affordable housing, and the need for more. A need which the Halifax Housing Authority, in cooperation with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the Nova Scotia Department of Housing, continued to recognize through the development of further public projects.

On November 2, 1959 the sod was turned for the development of Mulgrave Park. Plans called for two eight storey apartment buildings and 202 apartments in three storey maisonettes, for a total of 350 units. In the late 1950's another housing project, Westwood Park, was underway as well. This building, located within the Bayers Road Project, provided 65 units, of which four were equipped for the disabled. Another project, Uniacke Square, was created in 1966. After the completion of two phases, Uniacke Square augmented the growing housing resource by 183 units.

As these and other housing projects were developed and improved, the Halifax Housing Authority continued to monitor the need for still more rent geared to income housing in the Metro area, particularly for senior citizens. Thus, Sunrise Manor, with 166 units, was built. Many more senior's complexes soon followed.

Today, the Halifax Housing Authority manages and maintains 2540 units, 1313 family and 1227 senior, in 24 projects.

The Halifax Housing Authority states as its mission: "To manage housing that meets the physical and social needs of persons as determined by current housing policy."

The goals of The Halifax Housing Authority are:

1) To administer the resources of the Authority
2) To provide adequate financial resources to carry out the Authority Mission
3) To consistently administer tenancy requirements
4) To provide referral or staff services as required by tenants
5) To develop and train human resources
6) To provide adequate physical facilities and standards of maintenance

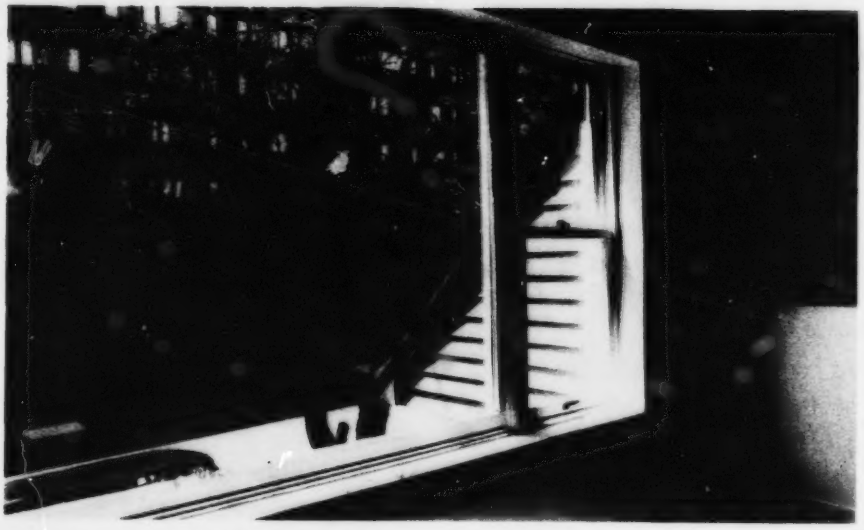
Uniacke Square, one of the Halifax Housing Authority's best-known projects, has become representative of the process of regeneration.

1988: A Significant Year For Upgrading Resources

Uniacke Square Regeneration

Uniacke Square is a 183 unit housing project located on Gottingen Street. It was built in two phases, from 1966-1967, and contains bachelor apartments, as well as apartments with one to four bedrooms.

In the mid-eighties it became apparent that some improvements would have to be made in the recreation facilities, exterior appearance, and interior conveniences of Uniacke Square apartments. In July of 1987 the regeneration of the Uniacke Square was officially announced. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation allocated $7 million for the project, with the Province of Nova Scotia contibuting 25% of the total. A steering committee comprised of community members, city staff, CMHC, the Halifax Housing Authority and other interested parties was formed to monitor the evolution of the project and to determine the effect that proposed changes would have on the existing project and the surrounding neighbourhood.



Looking out a renovated Uniacke Square unit window at Sunrise Manor.

The plans include the modernization of both kitchens and bathrooms, with the installation of new appliances, more efficient cupboard space, new bathtubs, showers and vanities. The exterior changes are just as dramatic. Windows and doors will be replaced with upgraded versions; new fronts will make the units more attractive; and porches and canopies will add personality to each of the units.

Upgraded play areas, private lawns and improved landscaping, also included in the plan, will enrich the lives of Uniacke Square's residents, and improve the attractiveness of the project and the entire neighbourhood.

To improve the utilization of the housing units, some bachelor and four bedroom apartments will be converted to one and two bedroom units, which are in greater demand.

The timing is right for an upswing in this project. Increased tenant pride in their development should ensure that Uniacke Square maintains its attractive new look.

The new look at Uniacke Square: individuality, privacy and hope for a better future.

Mulgrave Park

In 1988, a consultant was hired and a study completed by the Halifax Housing Authority and the Nova Scotia Department of Housing. The study found that many of the tenants of Mulgrave Park were concerned for their own safety and security, and expressed fears of the behavior of their fellow tenants. The Housing Authority determined that they must not only concentrate on the physical shelter, but that the social problems which affect residents of public housing must be addressed through allocation of new resources.

To address the tenants social needs it was decided that a Community Development worker should be hired to work with tenants to discuss their needs, fears, and problems and would hopefully arrive at conclusions which would not only help individuals, but the entire community.

A consultant has been engaged to study the feasibility of the regeneration of Mulgrave Park. The consultants are addressing through physical change the security and quality of life issues raised by the tenants in the report above (survey of tenants completed in 1988). As in the Uniacke Square project, the regeneration will enhance the attractiveness and efficiency of the tenants' residences and improve building security. The study is expected to address better recreation facilities and a more efficient management system, so that tenants' concerns are addressed quickly and effectively.

The study of the physical state of Mulgrave Park and the potential for regeneration is expected to be completed by the end of the summer 1989.

Modernization and Improvements in 1988

During 1988, many improvements were made to existing dwellings to maintain their value, security and appearance. The Halifax Housing Authority is pleased to announce the following improvements.

Vinyl siding was applied to six buildings in the Bayers Road Project, and all of the units' windows were replaced with new vinyl windows, complete with casements and trim. The appearance of the units was greatly enhanced by the new windows, which are virtually maintenance free.

The five year modernization of Westwood Park, including siding, was partially completed in 1988 with the restructuring of roofs to provide greater slope and reduce maintenance. The final three buildings in the first phase of the modernization received new vinyl siding.

Sunrise Manor required the emergency replacement of its underground oil tank upon discovery of a leak. All such oil tanks are now registered with the Department of Environment, and a tank replacement program is scheduled for review in July of 1989.

A window renewal program has begun at Greystone Drive. The first 150 replacement windows were installed in 1988. The Housing Authority also replaced doors in the project as part of the program to replace all doors with more durable secure, and attractive ones.

A complete roof assessment for all apartment buildings was undertaken during the year, and began with a five year prospectus for repair and replacement. Ahern Manor was the first of the Authority's apartment buildings to receive a new roof, as part of this program.

Mulgrave Park: a brighter exterior for residents.

Organizing For Change

The Planning Committee

The Planning Committee was formed to develop the mission statement, goals and objectives, of the Halifax Housing Authority and to study the resources and trends in the housing market before making their recommendations for short and long range plans. It is expected that, by having an active planning body, the Authority will be better prepared to deal with the constantly changing needs of the public housing market.

Re-organization and Strategy: Maintaining the Mandate

The Board of Directors of the Halifax Housing Authority, in 1987, recognized the need for a review of its management philosophy. A consultant was hired to carry out an organizational review.

The consultant recommended a new organizational structure which would improve and increase communication among the Board members, Halifax Housing Authority staff, public housing tenants, and the public. It should also improve liaison with the Department of Housing, the City of Halifax, and community agencies.

The refined management system will streamline the decision-making process and make the Halifax Housing Authority more responsive to changes in Housing policy and procedures, and better equipped to deal not only with the physical necessity of housing but with social and human needs.

The Application Process

The Authority's mandate is to provide affordable housing to Halifax residents as follows:

1) senior persons (over age 58)
2) parent(s) with dependent child(ren)
3) physically or mentally disabled individuals, who are able to live independently

All applicants who apply for housing receive a home visit to assess their eligibility. Applicants are point-scored on their present circumstances to determine their priority. Units are allocated based on family size and need. This system is designed to help those people who are residents of Halifax who are in need of decent, affordable accomodation. When a vacancy occurs, the eligible applicant with the greatest need for the vacancy available, is offered accommodation.

The 1988 turnover rate was by far the highest in the history of the Authority. Four-hundred and fifty-two rental units were made available to those on the waiting list. They included 154 one-bedroom senior citizen units, 298 family housing units, and 49 rent supplement apartments.

At the end of 1988, the number of applications on hand was 523 (217 families and 306 senior citizens). Five-hundred and forty-six new applications were received in 1988.

Planning ahead for tomorrows needs. These children mirror the cooperative way in which the Halifax Housing Authority works.

Project Profiles: Families and Seniors Needs

Family Housing

At the present time, there are 1313 Family units in Halifax, including those in the four family housing projects, Mulgrave Park, Westwood Park, Bayers Road, Uniacke Square, and the many in-fill units throughout the city. Units are available with as many as five bedrooms.

Since 1980, all new family housing apartments have been interspersed among housing in the private sector. Projects constructed prior to 1974 were high density population projects with 165 to 350 units. These projects require effective tenants' associations where concerns can be discussed, good security plans made and implemented, and well-organized recreation programs put in place which decrease the likelihood of vandalism and improve the quality of life.

In-fill housing: restoring the relationship between family and community.

Seniors' Housing

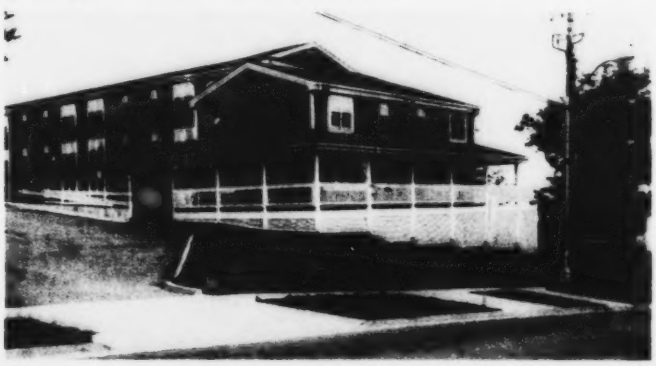
Thirty years ago the city began to accumulate information which showed a growing need for senior's housing. The population was aging; people were living longer, and some were forced to subsist on fixed incomes and live in sub-standard housing.

The Halifax Housing Authority manages thirteen senior citizens buildings in the city, a total of 1227 units.

Most senior citizens' units consist of one bedroom, living room, kitchenette, and bath, and are equipped with stoves, refrigerators, and smoke detectors. Most buildings also contain modified units for the disabled, and one building has six units for the hearing impaired.

Seniors' buildings feature common lounge areas, craft rooms, a common kitchenette, laundry rooms, and a medical room for visiting doctors and public health nurses. Most of the seniors' complexes have some form of organized recreation programs, and many have active tenants' associations, which implement these programs. The tenants enjoy the interaction with their peers in a community setting.

The Dr. Samuel Prince Manor, which opened in 1975, does not have bathtubs, but is equipped with sit-down showers. The planners felt that the showers would be safer for those experiencing difficulties getting in and out of bathtubs. The Sir John Thompson Manor has utilized a section of an old music school, which is attached to the building, to be used for recreational activities such as bingo, crafts, and exercise. The H.P. MacKeen Manor does not have units for the disabled, as it is located on a very steep hill, but does have six units for the hearing impaired and seven 2-bedroom units. This building is also equipped with a television camera system, whereby tenants in the building can turn their set to channel 13 and see who is in the lobby. The system adds security to the building. The Housing Authority employs a seniors co-ordinator who visits the buildings to ensure the tenants are aware of available community services and to assist them in their activities or planning, when required.



Seniors' housing: self respect and a community of peers.

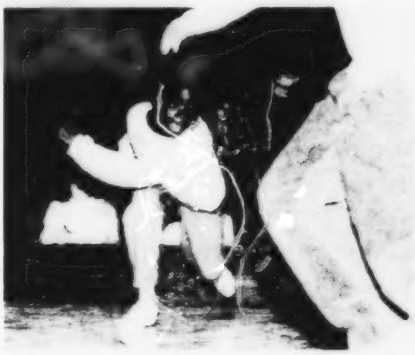
Recreation at Work For Long-Term Community Benefit

The Halifax Housing Authority Recreation Department is an important component of the long-term health of the community. The Department's goal is to foster and promote sportsmanship, co-operation in interpersonal relationships, and in developing the life skills necessary to enhance present and future quality of life.

During 1988 the objective was to provide programming necessary to reinforce the positive attributes of sportsmanship and fair play.

The Recreation Department offered and administered 1861 programs over this 12 month period; divided between Greystone Drive, Bayers/Westwood, Mulgrave Park and Uniacke Square. Children, ages 5 - 21, participated in programs ranging from arts and crafts, story time and movies to all major sport activities. Programs such as bowling and aerobics are offered for senior citizens. Highlights included, Canada Day celebrations, the annual summer program opening day BBQ's, Halifax Winter Carnival activities and two competitive softball teams succeeding in becoming Central Region Champions.

Whether it's calesthenics, elimination tag, or any other kind of sport, the Halifax Housing Authority stresses sportsmanship and fair play.



THE HALIFAX HOUSING AUTHORITY

BALANCE SHEET
DECEMBER 31, 1988

	December 31	
ASSETS	1987	1988
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash	$ 865	$ 8,802
Accounts receivable	52,542	45,496
Due from Tenents deposit fund	18,931	9,028
Inventories	66,896	74,466
Prepaid expenses	51,089	36,460
	192,296	174,471
TENANT'S DEPOSITS	106,695	106,591
	298,991	$ 281.062
LIABILITIES AND DEFICIT		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Cheques issued in excess of funds on deposit	$297,222	$ 60,999
Rent received in advance	222,688	241,182
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	515,847	498,185
	1,035,757	800,366
TENANT'S REFUNDABLE DEPOSITS	106,695	106,591
PARTNERSHIP ACCOUNTS		
Capital (deficit)		
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation	(763,038)	(2,485,692)
Province of Nova Scotia	488,895	2,415,851
City of Halifax	(569,318)	(556,054)
	(843,461)	(625,895)
	$ 298,991	$ 281,062

Note: The Halifax Housing Authority does not own the properties but manages properties on behalf its major contributor, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

HALIFAX HOUSING AUTHORITY

STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DEC. 31, 1988

	Year Ended December 31		
	Actual 1987	Budget 1988	Actual 1988
REVENUE			
Rent	$5,477,113	$5,954,343	$5,636,079
Electricity and cablevision	161,592	185,778	184,611
Sundry	27,186	27,000	29,444
	5,665,891	6,167,121	5,850,134
Less Bad Debts	27,572	27,000	30,827
	5,638,319	6,140,121	5,819,307
EXPENDITURES			
Administrative	809,941	868,004	913,733
Operating	3,976,414	4,201,227	4,194,186
Maintanence	1,886,282	2,160,303	2,032,848
Capital improvements	762,130	1,081,436	896,449
Municipal taxes	942,000	978,800	988,683
Grants to tenants' associations	2,016	10,088	4,448
Amortization of partnership investments	5,011,743	5,062,707	5,022,874
	13,390,526	14,362,565	14,053,221
EXCESS OF EXPENDITURES OVER REVENUE*	$7,752,207	$8,222,444	$8,233,914

*Since rents paid by our tenants are seldom sufficient to cover operating costs, the resulting loss must be subsidized. The net operating loss is shared by the three levels of government; 75% by CMHC 12.5% by the Province of Nova Scotia, and 12.5% by the City of Halifax.

Planning For the Future: Making Resources Go the Distance

Although, in 1988, waiting lists for public housing were at a record low, there still exists a need for suitable housing for seniors and families. In the Metro area, there are approximately 12,000 unemployed people. There are approximately 5,000 people receiving family benefits from provincial and municipal sources in the City of Halifax. In Halifax there are approximately 4,900 one parent families. New and remodeled housing stock will continue to reflect the trend toward smaller and more specialized units.

The Halifax Housing Authority has identified the importance of implementing a tenant life skills program. Each tenant will receive an orientation package to facilitate their understanding of their housing arrangements, and to cultivate increased communication between the Housing Authority and the tenants.

The Community Relations department will continue to employ cooperative education students to assist tenants in family housing units with budgeting and home management. The Authority will also seek to provide counselling to tenants who require it.

Services to seniors will be an area of emphasis in the future. The Housing Authority will provide coordinators to heighten the seniors' activity levels and ensure that they are aware of all community services available to them.

The Halifax Housing Authority has renewed its commitment to improve the physical condition of all buildings, and to create a preventative maintenance program for staff and tenants. All maintenance standards for appliances, equipment, grounds and buildings are to be reviewed. The Mulgrave Park regeneration, based on study results, will begin in 1989, and improvements to Uniacke Square will continue.

With the aid of an improved management system, the Halifax Housing Authority hopes to promote better communication among all parties involved with public housing, to provide increased availability of staff to tenants, to develop more efficient project management programs, and to increasingly monitor the needs, both physical and social, of the residents of public housing projects.

1989, and the years to follow, will be a time for the refinement of goals and objectives, and of adapting and modifying resources to meet ever-changing trends, to ensure that safe, affordable housing is available to those who need it.

The Halifax Housing Authority is about people and their needs. Here, seniors at G.B. Isnor Manor enjoy a weekly luncheon under the auspices of the New Horizons Program.